

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



YOUR PAY

HOW MUCH YOU GET PAID. Your pay depends on the duties and responsibilities of your job. That is, how difficult it is, how much responsibility you are given, and what kinds of experience and training are required. Federal service pay is based on employee grade and pay schedule. A salary schedule is available from your Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC).

THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH YOU ARE PAID. There are two main types of grading or classification systems used by the Federal government: General Schedule System and the Federal Wage System. In both cases, the actual rate of pay is normally adjusted annually through surveys to achieve comparability with the private sector.

The General Schedule System is based on the concept of substantially equal pay for substantially equal work within a pay locality and includes most professional, administrative, clerical, and technical positions. The rates of pay for each General Schedule (GS) grade are established by Federal law and are based on the locality or area in the United States in which the employee's duty station is located. GS positions include, for example, engineers, attorneys, geologists, clerk-typists, clerks, accountants, investigators, technicians and biologists. The GS system, often referred to as "white collar" is a salaried per annum system comprised of 15 levels, GS-01 through GS-15. Each level has 10 pay rates, called steps.

The Federal Wage System includes most trade and craft positions, both skilled and unskilled. Wage Grade positions are paid an hourly rate and include, for example, power plant operator, equipment mechanic, maintenance worker, etc.. Rates of pay are generally different in each locality and are based on the rates paid in industry in each local labor market for similar work. Federal Wage System includes Wage Grade (WG), Wage Leader (WL), Wage Supervisor (WS), XF (positions located on floating plants), XY and WA (Lock & Dam supervisor) positions, commonly referred to as "blue collar" positions. WG, WL, XF and XY positions have 15 levels with 5 pay-rate steps in each level. WS and WA positions have 19 levels with 5 pay-rate steps in each level. Wage Board (WB) positions are located at Power Plants and do not have levels or steps.

The Merit Pay System included mid-level managers in grades 13 through 15 (designated as GM) and unlike the General Schedule (GS) System of pay, was not comprised of varying levels and steps. Instead, employees were covered by a pay-for-performance system called the Performance Management Recognition System (PMRS) in which employees received merit increases and performance bonuses based on a rating schedule. The Merit System of pay was abolished on November 1993. All positions in grades 13 through 15 filled after November 1993 fall under the General Schedule System of pay and have the GS designation. All incumbent positions existing prior to the end of the Merit Pay System were transferred to the General Schedule System at their then current rates of pay and for administrative reasons retained the GM designation. In most cases this

meant that they were “off step” since the salaries did not match the “steps” on the GS pay table. These employees will remain “off step” and retain the GM designation until the incumbents are promoted, changed to a lower grade, transfer to another agency, are reassigned to a non-supervisory or non-management position or have a break in service of more than three (3) days. Once any of the above changes occurs, the employee’s “off step” status will end, along with the GM designation.

Senior Executive Service (SES) includes positions at the very top level of the Federal government. These are primarily managerial, supervisory and policy making positions. This gradeless system links salary to such things as scope of responsibility, personal qualifications and job performance.

PAY PERIODS. You are paid by Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer into your account every other week. Direct deposit is mandatory for all new employees. Your supervisor will advise you which day has been established as your regular payday. Usually there are 26 paydays each year. Pay periods end on a Saturday.

EARNINGS AND LEAVE STATEMENT. Your earnings and leave statement or “pay slip” is mailed to your home address. This statement indicates your gross and net pay, how much is subtracted for each of your deductions, and your present leave balance. The statement also indicates cumulative deductions since the first pay period of the year. Each time there is a change in your salary, deductions or leave balance, it will be reflected in your statement. As you receive these statements, it is your personal responsibility to verify the accuracy of your earnings and leave statement and to promptly report any errors to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC).

DEDUCTIONS TAKEN FROM YOUR PAY. Your paycheck is your take-home pay. Some of the following deductions may be taken from your pay before you receive it:

Federal Income Tax. The “pay-as-you-go” plan requires deductions from your salary each payday so that the total amount deducted during the year should be about the same as your federal income tax bill. The exact amount withheld will be reported to you (W-2 Form) early in the next calendar year for use in completing your income tax return.

State and Local Taxes. In some offices deductions are also made for State and local taxes. If you have any questions regarding these taxes, contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC).

Social Security. The amount of this deduction depends on the type of appointment you have and the retirement system (CSRS or FERS) you are covered by. Temporary employees are subject to this deduction.

Retirement. The amount of this deduction depends on the type of appointment you have and the retirement system (CSRS or FERS) you are covered by.

Group Life Insurance. Permanent employees are automatically insured for basic insurance under the Federal Employee’s Group Life Insurance (FGLI) Plan unless a waiver is filed. Keep in mind that the amount of insurance and consequently the deduction will change if your annual basic pay increases or decreases by one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).

Health Insurance. Permanent employees may also participate in one of the health benefits plans in which the employee pays the difference, through payroll deductions, between their cost of the plan and the amount the Government contributes. Temporary employees are eligible for health benefits after one continuous year of employment. Temporary employees pay the full cost of the insurance (employee and government share).

Medicare. Since January 1983, all federal employees have been subject to “Medicare” tax. This is the Medicare hospital insurance portion of the Social Security (FICA) tax.

Savings Bonds and Voluntary Allotments. You may buy Savings Bonds under the payroll deduction plan. You may also make allotments and assignments of pay to labor organizations (for dues, etc.) holding exclusive representation with your employing activity; the Combined Federal Campaign (United Way); and financial institutions.

PREMIUM PAY

Overtime. In general, the workday is 8 hours, and the law provides overtime for work in excess of 8 hours a day, or in excess of 40 hours in the workweek. General Schedule (GS) employees are paid time-and-one-half of their hourly rate for overtime work, with certain limitations. Unless otherwise prescribed in a collective bargaining (Union) agreement, a refusal to work overtime may be treated as a refusal to comply with an order, and thereby may result in disciplinary action.

Holiday Pay. Twice the employee’s basic rate of pay for work performed on a federal holiday, if the holiday is during the normal tour of duty. Wage Board (Power Plant) employees are paid at a different rate.

Sunday Premium Pay. A differential of 25% for work performed on a Sunday, if Sunday is in the normal tour of duty.

Night Differential. Employees under General Schedule are entitled to 10% for night work for any regularly scheduled work that falls between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 am.

Hazardous Pay Differential. Additional pay for the performance of irregular or intermittent hazardous duty or duty involving physical hardship. The specific working condition that warrants hazardous pay differential is determined by regulation.

Compensatory Time. Equal time off for hours worked instead of overtime pay. Requests for compensatory time off instead of payment for overtime may be denied by the supervisor for workload related reasons.

PAY INCREASES WITHOUT A CHANGE IN JOBS

Within-Grade Increases. These are rates (steps) within the salary range for each grade for which most employees become eligible after serving a required waiting period without a change in duties, title or grade. All General Schedule (GS) and Federal Wage System (WG, WL, WS, XF, XY)

employees who are not at the top step of their grade are eligible, except for GS employees serving on temporary appointments and employees paid at the Federal minimum wage. Temporary employees under the Federal Wage System do earn within-grade increases. Wage Board (WB) employees do not receive within-grade increases; pay increases for Wage Board employees are determined by the Dept. of Defense (DOD) Wage Fixing Authority.

The requirements an employee must meet to receive a within-grade increase are:

- Serve the required waiting period;
- Not have received an equivalent increase during the prescribed waiting period; and
- Been rated Successful Level 3 or higher under TAPES (Total Army Personnel Evaluation System) on the most recent performance rating during the required waiting period.

Waiting periods for full-time employees and part-time General Schedule employees with prearranged regularly scheduled tours of duty are:

GENERAL SCHEDULE (GS)			TAPES
Steps	Waiting Period	Creditable Nonpay Status	Performance Rating
2-4	52 calendar weeks	2 workweeks	Successful Level 3 or Higher
5-7	104 calendar weeks	4 workweeks	
8-10	156 calendar weeks	6 workweeks	

Waiting periods for full-time employees and part-time Federal Wage System employees with prearranged regularly scheduled tours of duty are:

FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM (WG,WL,WS, XF, XY)			TAPES
Steps	Waiting Period	Creditable Nonpay Status	Performance Rating
2	26 calendar weeks	1 workweek	Successful Level 3 or Higher
3	78 calendar weeks	3 workweeks	
4-5	104 calendar weeks	4 workweeks	

Note: Wage Board (WB) employees do not receive within-grade increases.

Incentive Awards Program. Established because the Government believes that employees deserve special recognition for performance and creative excellence. Employees may earn awards for overall high performance, suggestions, inventions, or for special acts or service.

Quality Step Increase (QSI). This is an additional within-grade increase given in recognition of high quality performance above that ordinarily found in the type of position concerned. A GS employee who has demonstrated exceptional performance may receive an immediate Quality Step Increase based upon an

Exceptional or Successful Level 1 annual performance rating and supervisory recommendation. A QSI is given for past performance with the expectations that the exceptional performance will continue. The basis for the QSI is tied to the employee's performance as measured against the performance standards.

Performance Award (PA). One-time cash, Performance Award, can be given to GS, GM, WG or WB employees for efforts that clearly exceed standards for satisfactory performance on the duties critical to the job. A PA is given solely on past performance and is tied to the employee's performance as measured against the performance standards.

Special Act or Service Award. This is a cash award for non-recurring contributions such as work on a special project, performance exceeding job requirements on a particular assignment or task, a scientific achievement, or an act of heroism.

Honor Award. This award includes medals, certificates, plaques or other items that can be worn or displayed. Decisions to grant honor awards are made judicially and solely on the basis of merit.

Time-Off Award. Supervisors/Managers may grant employees Time-Off Awards as an incentive award for superior accomplishments which results in benefits to the government or to recognize employee performance as documented in the employees overall Performance Rating. A Time-Off Award is not intended to replace Performance Awards or Quality Step Increases. Rather, it is designed to recognize achievements and/or short periods of performance which result in benefits to the government similar to Special Acts or Service Awards. This award carries no loss of pay or charge to normal leave accounts and may be offered alone or in combination with cash or non-cash awards. A Time-Off Award cannot be converted to cash.

Cash Award for Suggestions. Employees may be paid cash for adopted suggestions that improve the work of, and save money for, the organization. Cash awards are given for suggestions with both "tangible" (measurable) or "intangible" savings. Suggestions are made in writing, and then routed to an organizational element for anonymous evaluation. Awards may be granted for ideas which: accomplish a job better, faster or cheaper; simplify or improve operations, tools, methods, procedures, layouts or organizations; increase individual or group productivity or manpower utilization; conserve materials or property and/or promote health or improve working conditions.